



CITY OF DECATUR ILLINOIS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 6, 2023

Council updated on Transit campus master plan; approves overnight closure of downtown parks, major stormwater projects

Decatur, IL – Highlights from the November 6, 2023, Decatur City Council meeting include an update on the Decatur Public Transit campus master plan, and the approval of the permanent overnight closure of downtown parks, as well as major stormwater projects.

Transit Campus Master Plan update

On Monday night the Decatur City Council received an update on the Decatur Public Transit campus master plan and approved the next phase of its design. Richard L. Bowen & Associates will assist with designing the master plan, which is needed to continue applying for grants to fund the campus transformation.

The master plan will provide the City with detailed architectural designs and prints while focusing on creating a sustainable joint Transit/Municipal Services campus. Plans include a state-of-the-art multi-lane vehicle wash bay, ample vehicle storage with EV infrastructure and chargers, maintenance garages capable of accommodating EV vehicles and buses, solar panels on the roofs of buildings, and shared fueling stations.

The City has already received grants totaling over \$24 million to transform current transit facilities to support alternative fuel and EV technologies. More info is in the Council agenda packet.

Permanent overnight closure for downtown parks

Central Park and Preston Jackson Park in downtown Decatur will remain closed from 12 a.m. midnight to 6 a.m. each night. In December 2022, Council agreed to the closure for a one-year trial period and asked that its effect on the public be monitored. Monday night they removed the sunset clause and made the overnight closure permanent.

Decatur Police reported minimal interactions once enforcement efforts began in April 2023. They conducted 134 checks during hours the parks were closed. Officers encountered people in violation of the closure 21 separate times. Each time the individuals left without citations being issued. One

subject was arrested and that person had a warrant for their arrest. The encounters significantly slowed over time as October 2023 involved only one encounter with a violator.

Major stormwater projects and rates

Council continued its investment in improving the City's storm drainage system Monday. They approved a contract with A&R Mechanical Services, Inc. to conduct more than \$400,000 of major projects in the City's Storm Drainage Improvement Plan for the following areas:

- Karen Drive: Replacing approximately 285 feet of 12-inch storm sewer
- Rosewood Drive: Regrading approximately 700 ft of ditches and culvert replacement
- Willcox Lane and Sullivan Drive: installing approximately 600 ft of storm sewer, regrading, and driveway culvert replacement in this newly-annexed area

The City has a significant backlog of storm drainage improvement projects. They are mostly paid for with the stormwater utility fee, established in 2014. To continue chipping away at the backlog, City Council agreed to an increased stormwater fee, which had not changed since 2014. The base fee of \$3 per month will increase \$1 in 2024 and another \$1 in 2025. In addition, the usage fee of \$0.67 (for developed residential properties under 1 acre in size) will go up \$0.21 in 2024 and \$0.22 in 2025. These fees will increase by 2.5 percent or by the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) each year thereafter, whichever is greater. Any proposed increase over five percent or higher will have to be discussed and authorized by City Council.

In other business

In other business...Council approved two resolutions that will further improve public safety. Decatur Police will purchase a second Crime Prevention Surveillance Trailer. The mobile surveillance unit improves safety/security operations, crime deterrence, and evidence collection. At its last meeting, City Council approved the purchase of the first unit, and recommended a second unit be bought. It will be purchased for no more than \$39,297 using a violence prevention grant from State Senator Doris Turner.

Additionally, Council agreed to a five-year lease with Flock Safety. There are 101 Flock cameras deployed throughout Decatur. They have been highly valuable in efforts to address crimes ranging from theft to homicide. Agreeing to a five-year lease will ultimately save the City money. The contract will be supported through 2025 with ARP money.

More information about these topics can be found in the City Council Agenda packet, downloadable/viewable here: www.decaturil.gov/mayor-and-council/council-meetings/

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